The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service aims to serve economic and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and supplies such information as benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1759 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 52

Labor Demands WLB Set Minimum Wage Of 72 Cents An Hour As General Rule

Washington, D. C.—The labor members of the National War Labor Board submitted to the full board a resolution which would establish 72 cents an hour as the straight-time hourly rate below which the board's rate shall be considered substandard.

They charged that the board for almost three years had refused to attack this problem in "forthright fashion."

Under the terms of the labor group's resolution, any employer could get board approval to grant wage increases up a rate of 72 cents an hour. In disputes, the board would not necessarily order a 72-cent minimum in all cases.

Under present policy, employers may grant wage increases up to a 50-cent rate without asking board approval.

In a statement, the labor group said that "evidence submitted to the board indicates that, in order to maintain even the barest minimum standard of living, an employee should receive no less than 72 cents an hour."

The statement declared that the board had "waived the issue (of substandard rates) and sought to circumvent or postpone an adequate solution by creating wholly unsatisfactory administrative stop-gaps." It added:

"The board has persisted in this conduct despite Presidential assurances, despite powers granted in statutes and executive orders, despite its own brave words that action would be taken to meet the problem of eliminating substandards of living. It is late indeed, but not too late, for the board to set substandards and effectively."

The statement quoted President Roosevelt as telling Congress last January, "It is our duty now to begin to lay the plans and determine the strategy for the winning of a lasting peace and the establishment of a higher standard of living higher than ever before known. We cannot be content no matter how high the general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people, whether it be one-third, or one-fifth, or one-tenth, is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed and insecure."

In another part, the labor group said, "we assigned to one sector of that substandard battle front, the War Far has carried on the battle in only a half-hearted manner."

The statement also recalled that the President, in his executive order on wage stabilization, had authorized the board to approve increases to eliminate substandards of living.

In another paragraph, they said, "have been made to get the board to consider the actual cost of a minimum standard of living, but these attempts have so far availed nothing."

Red Cross Seeks Help From Labor To Render Peak Service In 1945

Washington, D. C.—American Red Cross operations at home and abroad will reach their war-time peak in 1945, Chairman Basil O'Connor announced. The minimum goal for the Red Cross War Fund to be raised in March 1945 has been fixed at $180,000,000.

To mobilize the support of organized labor in achieving this goal, agreements were reached between the American Red Cross and the official war relief committees of the American Federation of Labor and the CIO. Special labor posters, literature and recordings for local broadcasting and for use over loudspeaking systems in industrial plants now are being prepared in anticipation of the campaign.

"Our new budgets," Mr. O'Connor said, "represent an appreciable increase in the services we will render in Europe, in the Pacific and at home but we have been able to keep the total 1945 goal slightly under the one for 1944 because of oversubscription of our earlier campaigns and certain economies in this year's operations.

"After personally inspecting our operations in England and on the continent, and after conferring with Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton, and Clark, I foresee an increase rather than a decrease in the need for American Red Cross services on the continent from now and for some time after the European fighting is over. Likewise it is obvious the American Red Cross must expand its Pacific and Far Eastern operations during the coming year.

"It is our intention that Red Cross stay with our troops until all of them are returned home and continue to serve them through their readjustment to civilian life. For this service the Red Cross must appeal to the public to consider our goal of $180,000,000 as an absolute minimum."

Green Asks Social Security Drive To Enact Legislation In 45 States

Says State Action Can Improve Unemployment Pay Standards

Pennsylvania AFL Responds By Offering Strong Bill

Washington, D. C.—State Federations of Labor throughout the nation were called upon by President William Green of the AFL to fight for improvements in their unemployment insurance laws. The issue is particularly important, he said, because 44 legislatures meet in 1945.

Mr. Green pointed out that when the "Ripper Bill," to give workers more adequate protection in the reconversion period, was before Congress, its lawmaker "were literally bombarded with assurances from state officials that the states could handle the matter of unemployment compensation."

"Largely on the basis of such assurances, Congress decided the major responsibility for unemployment compensation rests with the states," he said. "It is now up to the states to make good these assurances by making changes in their laws necessary to meet the requirements of sound unemployment insurance."

Such changes, Mr. Green declared, should include an increase in maximum jobless benefits from $25 to $30 a week, the maximum from $18 to $25 and asked that payments be allowed up to 26 weeks instead of the present 16.

Extension of partial unemployment compensation and lowering the waiting period between loss of employment and receipt of payments from two to one week also was recommended along with changes in the work registration requirements to require all employers to show ability to pay wages equal to those of highest paid workers.

President James L. McDevitt and other State AFL executives were assured help by the Federation in drumming up widespread support for the program.

Other legislation indorsed by the conference included: Civil service for state employees; and the prohibition of a State fair employment practice commission to prevent discrimination because of race, creed or color.

Harrisburg — The Pennsylvania Federation of Labor (AFL) urged the 1945 General Assembly to increase unemployment compensation benefits. It called for a strong labor drive on this and other legislative issues in the legislative conference of the State AFL recommended boosting unemployment benefits from $8 to $10 a week and the maximum from $18 to $25 and asked that payments be allowed up to 26 weeks instead of the present 16.

Extension of partial unemployment compensation and lowering the waiting period between loss of employment and receipt of payments from two to one week also was recommended along with changes in the work registration requirements to require all employers to show ability to pay wages equal to those of highest paid workers.

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Industry And Labor Work Together For Post-War Jobs In Philadelphia

Philadelphia. — In this city of "brotherly love," industry appears to have dropped its aloofness and taken labor into the fold of partnership for the development of a program of high post-war employment.

The initiative in that direction was taken by the Philadelphia unit of the Committee for Economic Development, headed nationally by Paul Hoffman, president of the Studebaker Corporation.

The national committee's stated goal is 7 to 10 million more jobs after the war than existed in 1940, and it has set up affiliates throughout the country to plan for that goal.

The local committee went further than similar bodies in other communities in collaborating with labor. Here where labor advisory groups were established for such cooperation, but in addition to the committee took the additional step of including a labor representative on its executive board, namely, the writer, as earlier mentioned.

W. H. Woodward, jr., general chairman of the Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen on the Pennsylvania Lines (east) and chairman of the labor advisory committee to fill that position as spokesman for all labor. The advisory committee of the AFL and CIO representatives named by their respective central bodies.

Employer-labor forums are being held, industry by industry, to discuss what can be done in the way of bringing about greater employment after the war in Philadelphia. These forums, first conducted by the rank, have been thrown open to the frankest discussion, "with no holds barred."

New Year Message

By WILLIAM GREEN

President, American Federation of Labor

As we enter our fourth year of war, American workers are determined that it shall be the last.

Labor issues this New Year warning to the enemy—that in the months ahead the soldiers of production will back up the fighting forces of the United Nations with the greatest output of planes, tanks, guns and ships in history.

This constantly increasing flow of war production is the best evidence that America grows ever stronger while our enemies grow progressively weaker. It is the most convincing proof that final victory cannot be long delayed. The Nazis and the Japs are up against it now but they are doomed to suffer much more crushing blows in 1945 unless they surrender unconditionally.

Victory over Hitler and Tojo will not, however, end labor's responsibilities to the cause of freedom. We will then consider this war won until our chief post-war objectives are won. These are:

1. Establishment of permanent peace under world democracy.
2. Jobs for all in peace-time America.

In order to assure lasting peace, the American Federation of Labor will insist that the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter are respected and followed in the terms of the peace. Unless we accord justice to the peoples of all nations, unless we give them every opportunity to work out their post-war problems through free and democratic self-government, another war is sure to follow. Territorial partitioning of weak nations, mass deportation of populations and the suppression of freedom are Nazi methods which breed only hate and strife. Such methods must not be practiced by the United Nations.

To create jobs for all in America after the war ends requires a new upsurge of national unity among the functional groups which make up our economic life. Labor, industry and agriculture must work together with the government to achieve a permanent post-war goal. Narrow self-interest must be subordinated to the general welfare if we are to make any substantial progress. In my opinion, confidence in the future can best be strengthened by developing the unity of action behind the united purpose to provide jobs for all.

Great opportunities lie ahead of us after the war ends. In the hope and anticipation of victory in the coming year, I extend to the members of our armed forces and to the vast army of production soldiers best wishes for a happy New Year.

Congressman Hits High Wage Tales

Washington, D. C.—Propaganda that American workers are rolling in wealth as a result of "price wages" was blasted by Representative Chet Holifield (Dem., Calif.), in a House speech urging legislation to increase the minimum wage rate to 65 cents an hour.

Holifield for a quarter of a century has been a manufacturer and a big employer of labor. This gives significance to his statement that manpower has been difficult to find for the production of cotton duck for tents for our soldiers because of scandalously low wages in the textile industry. A similar situation exists in other critical industries, he said.

"The public and many of us who should know better," Holifield told the House, "have been led to believe that all American workers in wartime are getting rich off high wages. This is simply not the case.

"Over 40 percent of us are bunched down with low-income groups. Thirty per cent of all consumer units in the United States in 1943 were receiving less than $1,200 a year—less than sufficient to provide a decent subsistence.

"There are still 7,093,000 families and single consumer groups earning below $1,000 a year.

"Enactment of legislation to wipe out starvation wages is necessary not merely on humanitarian grounds, but as a practical and necessary step toward the solution of many of our post-war economic and social problems.

"It has been said that we cannot stop to make social reforms but must concentrate on winning the war. Our failure as a nation to remedy obvious injustice, has, however, interfered with the war program."

Thousands of Post-War Jobs Created By New Federal-Aid Highway Law

Washington, D. C.—Many thousands of post-war jobs will be created under a law signed by President Roosevelt appropriating $1,500,000,000 for Federal aid in building State highways.

The President called the enactment "a challenge" to the States, counties and cities which must originate specific road-building projects to get this program ready for construction after the war.

Adequate facilities for highway communication, Mr. Roosevelt said, would be essential as "a part of an integrated economy that will assure jobs."

Rep. Clifford Thomas H. MacDonald, Commissioner of Public Roads, viewed as marking a new period in highway development the $500,000,000 for the construction of highways in each of the first three post-war years.

It requires the designation of two new highway systems in addition to the existing Federal-aid system. One, the National System of Interstate Highways, would consist of 40,000 miles. The other would consist of the principal secondary and feeder roads, urban extensions, interstate roads, rural free delivery mail and public school bus routes, either outside or inside municipalities of less than 5,000 population.

The annual authorization of $500,000,000 specified $225,000,000 for the Federal-aid system, $150,000,000 for secondary or feeder roads and $125,000,000 for the Federal-aid highway system in urban areas. Since the new national interstate system is to be included in the Federal-aid system, both the $225,000,000 and the $125,000,000 will be available for expenditure on this system.

Funds for the Federal-aid system are to be apportioned among the States, one-third in proportion to population and one-third in proportion to mileage rural free delivery and star routes.

N. Y. PLANS ROAD JOBS

Albany—New York State will receive $100,000,000 under the $1,500,000,000 Federal Highway Aid Bill signed by President Roosevelt, but speedily, the legislature which has always played such an important role in the Czechoslovak republic. After the liberation of our country from the Nazi yoke, the Czechoslovak trade unions will have an important symbol to accomplish. The file offered by our American brothers has, therefore, not only a moral significance. Through the Free Trade Union Committee, our American brothers are helping to revive the movement and are paying tribute to the consolidation of peace and social justice."

French And Czech Labor Leaders Applaud Free Trade Union Fund

New York City—As news of the Free Trade Union Committee's million dollar War Relief Fund for the liberation of free trade unions abroad reached foreign labor leaders, cables of thanks and appreciation began to come to Matthew Woll, president of the Labor League for Human Rights, of which the committee is a part.

Messages were received from Albert Gazagnaire, secretary of the French General Federation of Labor, and from Jan Decko, member of the Executive Committee of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile.

"As yourselves, we are convinced that free labor movements will be the firmest foundations of peace," said Mr. Gazagnaire. "We are grateful to the Labor League for Human Rights and the American Federation of Labor for assisting us to rebuild our free democratic trade unions."

The organization of the Free Trade Union Committee is a free manifestation of labor solidarity," Minister Decko declared in his message. "Your help will enable us to reconstruct, speedily, the trade unions which had always played such an important role in the Czechoslovak republic. After the liberation of our country from the Nazi yoke, the Czechoslovak trade unions will have an important symbol to accomplish. The file offered by our American brothers has, therefore, not only a moral significance. Through the Free Trade Union Committee, our American brothers are helping to revive the movement and are paying tribute to the consolidation of peace and social justice."

War Production Needs Up As Results Of Nazi Drive

Senate Committee Praises Labor, Hits Army Production Mistakes

Washington, D. C.—The Senate War Investigating Committee, headed by Senator James Mead of New York, declared in an official report that labor and industry have done a splendid job on the production front.

"Production and distribution have exceeded all records and most expectations," the committee declared. "From almost any viewpoint, this has been the most colossal undertaking of mankind. That this task has been accomplished as well as it has been is a miracle of economic organization."

However, the report emphasized that this achievement should not blind the nation to the mistakes that have occurred. The committee charged that "the War Department, with 'ruthless' stripping industry of 'irreplaceable trained personnel' and of failing to use this manpower to the best advantage after induction. The committee noted that the Army has been forced occasionally to furlough or release men to fill gaps created by the draft.

The committee also criticized the armed forces for permitting vast surpluses of some types of war equipment to accumulate. Such surpluses, the committee charged, have "hindered balanced war supply."

"The manpower and materials which were thus surprised could have been used to produce more urgently needed items," the committee report said. "By better planning, the facilities and manpower now devoted to the production of articles in which we have adequate stocks could be curtailed, thus releasing productive capacity which can, at least in part, be transferred to the production programs in which we now have shortages."

Be Sure To Tune In On Jan. 7!

Washington, D. C.—Remember the date—Jan. 7—and the time—1:15 P. M. Eastern War Time—and the station—the start of the AFL's new radio series over a nation-wide NBC network.

The most important home front problem right now is production—the need for getting more and more fighting equipment overseas so that our armed forces can drive the Nazis back and force their unconditional surrender as quickly as possible. This is the subject and the object of the Jan. 7 broadcast. Be sure to listen in!

Closer Ties With Latin-American Seen As Result of Meany Trip To Mexico

Washington, D. C.—Long efforts by the American Federation of Labor to build closer relations with the Latin-American labor movement are bearing fruit.

Latest step in that direction was a conference held by AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany in Mexico City with leaders of the Mexican Federation of Labor, commonly known as the C. T. M. (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Mexico).

Mr. Meany met with Fidel Velasquez, general secretary, and other officials of the C. T. M. The result, he said, on his return here was "very encouraging."

"The impression I got is that real trade unionists are running the C. T. M.," he declared. "They made it clear that they want Latin-American labor solidarity as much as we do. I am confident we will make real progress from here on."

Further conferences are expected, both to this country and in Mexico, between leaders of the two labor movements, Mr. Meany said. These he predicted, will be a stepping stone to development of the ties with free, democratic unions in other Latin-American nations.

The parley was looked on as particularly significant because of attempts being made in Communist quarters to build a rival Latin-American labor federation. These attempts have received much publicity in the Daily Worker, it was pointed out, which at the same time denounced Mr. Meany's trip as a "splitting activity."

"If the 'Daily Worker' is angry with us, we must be on the right track," Mr. Meany said. "Our aim is to spread the principle of free, democratic unionism, not totalitarianism."

Mr. Meany made the journey to Mexico City on instructions from President William Green and the Federation's committee on international relations.

Colorado Court Curbs Labor Law

Denver.—The State Supreme Court ruled in a decision hailed as a victory for labor that two sections of the so-called "Labor Peace Act" of 1943, requiring incorporation of labor unions, are invalid.

It in declared inoperative sections making a strike unlawful unless authorized by a majority vote by secret ballot of the union involved, and making such a vote a legal condition precedent to a strike.

The rest of the law, the court said, did not interfere with the Norris-La Guardia Declaratory Judgment Act on which this case was based because that law did not intend "that a court of equity enter into speculative inquiry" as to constitutionality.

Shorn of the incorporation and strike-vote provisions, the other attributes of the law will be tested in the courts when the authorities seek to enforce them.

The Supreme Court's opinion was on appeal by the AFL from a Denver District Court decision which likewise had held that the requirements for incorporation were invalid.

The lower court erred, however, in attempting to uphold the constitutionality of the rest of the law under the Declaratory Judgment Act, the higher court said.

BUILDING TRADES PLAN WIDER APPRENTICESHIP

Washington, D. C.—A program to develop apprentice training in the building trades on a wider scale than ever before—particularly for returning veterans—was mapped at a meeting of the national committee on apprenticeship for the construction industry.

The committee is composed of union and employer representatives, headed by Marion H. Hedges, research director of Electrical Workers. Its new program was outlined with approval of the U. S. Apprentice Training Service and other Federal agencies.

Machinists Win Big Airline Unit

Washington, D. C.—One of the biggest victories in the world—Pan-American Airways—was brought under the banner of the International Association of Machinists for all employes in its maintenance shops, numbering over 4,000.

An agreement just signed between the IAM and Pan-American recognizes the union as exclusive bargaining agency for these workers, mostly in repairing, maintaining and operating planes. They are employed largely in five big shops—Brownsville, Texas; LaGuardia Field, New York; Seattle, San Francisco and Miami.

The Machinists hitherto represented the workers at the Brownsville and LaGuardia field shops, but signed up a sufficient number of employes at the other shops to give the union a substantial majority over the entire system. On the basis of evidence of this majority, the pact was extended into under terms of the Railway Labor Act, which also governs labor relations in air transportation.

This recognition agreement will be followed later by negotiation of a system-wide contract, covering wages, hours and working conditions, with supplements for the various divisional shops.

WORKERS HELP TOP WAR BOND QUOTAS

Washington, D. C. — Americans "from here to eternity," Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, jr., announced that the Sixth War Loan went way over the top, subscriptions exceeding by $5,000,000,000 the $14,000,000,000 asked for.

Morgenthau said that all allotments had been oversubscribed, including that of series "E" bonds, purchased mainly by workers.

Labor Pledges Increased Effort To Supply Our Fighting Forces

Washington, D. C.—The destructive Nazi offensive on the Western front has greatly increased war production needs, Government leaders announced.

At a result, new orders have been rushed to war plants, manpower restrictions have been tightened up all along the line and the reconversion program has been halted in its tracks.

Labor leaders, headed by AFL President William Green, exhorted the nation's workers to stay on the job under any circumstances and to do their utmost to boost vitally needed production of war materials.

AFL unions responded by rushing skilled workers to plants listed as "critical" by the War Production Board and the War Department.

Meanwhile, it was officially confirmed in testimony before the Senate War Investigating Committee that American soldiers at the front have not suffered from any lack of ammunition or fighting equipment due to production lags at home.

This testimony was given by General Thomas R. Somervell, chief of the Army Service Forces, in response to questions by worried Senators who had been disturbed by newspaper headlines and radio broadcasts of munitions shortages at the fighting fronts, Somervell declared:

"Make no mistake about it; no one has suffered from a lack of supplies. The boys at the front have had everything they could possibly move to the front.

"Our problem is to keep them from suffering from a lack of supplies in the future."

Senator James M. Tunnell asked Somervell about stories that our soldiers have had to be "rationed" ammunition in some spots because of shortages.

"That's because of difficulties of getting ammunition from the ships to the guns and not because of any failure of production," Somervell replied.

He added that some divisions are now being used up at a greater rate than they are being produced, thus eating into reserves. What's vital now, he said, is to replenish those reserves, and that's why the army is clamoring for sharply increased production.

Further confirmation came from Associated Press War Correspondent Don Gallagher. Reporting from the battlefronts where the Nazis are desting American lines, he said in a dispatch dated Dec. 19:

"There undoubtedly are multiple reasons for the American setback and it is going to take weeks, and perhaps months, to assess them truly. It was not due, however, to any shortage of men and material in the broad sense.

"The Allies have a superiority in men and materials along the western front and no instance has come to light to date where the defeat of any particular unit was caused by running out of ammunition or personnel shortage within the unit."

Explaining the sudden need for increased output, WPB Chairman Krog said:

"Eisenhower has been doing everything he could to break through the West Wall. If he could have done it promptly, his munitions would have been sufficient. But he couldn't.

"Now, to safeguard against what will come, in addition to what has happened, we must get ready to fight the kind of war we have been fighting for the past two months for another year—or perhaps longer."

Mr. Krog declared that while supplies needed to halt the German offensive were within reach of American forces, the vigor of the enemy's attack emphasized "the need for concentrated heat on the production program."

FARM LEADER ASKS UNITY FOR POST-WAR

Chicago.—Joint parleys by leaders of agriculture, labor and industry to frame a postwar economy of abundance were advocated before a conference here by President Edward O'Neal of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

"Farmers want an economy of abundance and they are ready to join with industry and labor to achieve such a goal, testifying before the agriculture subcommittee of the House special committee on postwar economic policy and planning.

UMW GETS NEW BID TO REJOIN FEDERATION

Washington, D. C.—The United Mine Workers (CIO) announced receipt of a letter from AFL President William Green transmitting to the UMW the invitation appeal for renewed conference seeking reaffiliation of the two unions.

UMW representatives told newspapermen that the letter would receive "all considerations."

The convention urged the miners to resent their application for affiliation in the hope that jurisdictional questions which forced rejection of the first UMW offer may be ironed out.